

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 VO-03 SCA-01 /067 W

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R 161135Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 290

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FOR E/EA/HA/ORM

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, VS

SUBJECT: INTERVIEW OF VIETNAMESE HELICOPTER PILOT WHO FLED
TO THAILAND.

REF: BANGKOK 5366

1. ON MARCH 8 A VIETNAMESE HELICOPTER PILOTED BY HO HAI KIM
ARRIVED IN CHATABURI PROVINCE, THAILAND. EMBASSY REFUGEE
OFFICER INTERVIEWED PILOT AND HIS CREW CHIEF MARCH 12 IN
MAKHAM DISTRICT JAIL, CHANTABURI PROVINCE.

2. THE THAI AUTHORITIES DID NOT PERMIT MUCH MORE TIME THAN
IT TOOK TO COLLECT BASIC BIODATA ON THE REFUGEES. HOWEVER,
IT WAS LEARNED THAT THE HELICOPTER TOOK OFF FROM BINH THUY
AIRFIELD NEAR CAN THO. FOR ADDITIONAL FUEL, A 55-GALLON DRUM OF
GASOLINE WAS PLACED INSIDE THE CHOPPER. AS FUEL RAN LOW THE CREW
CHIEF, USING A NYLON TUBE, WAS ABLE TO SIPHON THE ADDITIONAL FUEL
INTO THE FUEL TANK.

3. PILOT HAI INDICATED THAT HE HAD RECENTLY BEEN ASKED TO
RETURN TO THE VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE TO ASSIST IN TRAINING OF NEW
PILOTS. HOWEVER, HE HAD APPARENTLY BEEN DOING SOME FLYING

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RELATED TO AGRICULTURE IN THE DAYS PRIOR TO HIS ESCAPE.

4. FOLLOWING IS BASIC BIODATA:

PILOT: HO KIM HAI (LAST RANK - LIEUTENANT)

BORN 10 JUNE 1946, SADEC PROVINCE, VIETNAM

WIFE, NGUYEN HI THUAN

BORN SEPTEMBER 1948

ALSO ACCOMPANYING THEM IN THE HELICOPTER WERE THEIR FOUR CHILDREN. HAI WAS TRAINED AT FORT WALTERS AND AT FORT HUNGER IN 1970 CLASS 70-10). HE TRIED TO FLEE AT TAKE-OVER BUT COULD NOT DUE TO INSUFFICIENT FUEL.

CREW CHIEF: NGUYEN VAN THANG

BORN 18 AUGUST 1949, TRA VINH, VIETNAM

THANG WAS NOT ABLE TO BRING HIS FAMILY. AT THE FALL OF VIETNAME HE HELD THE RANK OF SERGEANT AND IS A QUALIFIED HELICOPTER MECHANIC.

5. PILOT HAI HAS REQUESTED THAT NEWS OF HIS ESCAPE BE RELATED TO HIS GODFATHER, CLARENCE L'HOMMIDIEUX, INNS OF OCALA, 2259 SE PINE STREET, OCALA FLORIDA 32676 (PHONE: 904-622-8270). HE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO INFORM HIS FORMER INSTRUCTOR PILOT AT FORT WALTERS, CAPT. THOMAS HORNER (PRIMARY HELICOPTER TRAINING), OF HIS ARRIVAL.

6. PILOT SPEAKS GOOD TO EXCELLENT ENGLISH. CREW CHIEF, GOOD ENGLISH.

7. WE EXPECT THAT THE GROUP WILL SOON BE TRANSFERRED FROM PRISON TO THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEE CAMP NEAR KORAT.

8. WE WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S THOUGHTS ON THE PAROLE OUTLOOK FOR THESE PEOPLE.

9. EMBASSY IS SUBMITTING HAI'S COMMENTS ON VIETNAMESE INTERNAL SITUATION BY AIRGRAM.
WHITEHOUSE

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